

GWEN MOORE 4TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES HOUSING AND INSURANCE MONETARY POLICY AND TRADE, PANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND POLICY COMMITTEE



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WASHINGTON, DC 20515

# Congress of the United States House of Representatives

January 24, 2018

Mr. John Cooke, Acting Regional Administrator U.S. General Services Administration Great Lakes Region Five 230 S Dearborn Street Chicago, IL 60604-1505

Dear Mr. Cooke,

I am writing to request information regarding your agency's involvement in the lease procurement for the Social Security Administration (SSA), Mitchell Street Branch Office located at 1710 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Regional Communications Director Doug M. Nguyen and Area Director Chris Churchill recently informed me of the closing of the SSA office located in my congressional district. Mr. Nguyen stated that the SSA, GSA, along with the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Protective Services made the decision to close this office.

I have received concerned calls from City of Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Alderman Jose Perez. Mayor Barrett has informed me of available space for relocation of the Mitchell Street Branch at the newly built Milwaukee Public Library building located at 906 W. Historic Mitchell Street. The entire second floor is currently vacant and available. I would like to hear from you on whether this space can be considered.

The City of Milwaukee's south side is home to the largest Hispanic population in the state. The Mitchell Street Branch Office provides services to constituents with limited English ability. The closing of this office not only takes away much needed resources and services to the community, but it also creates a challenge to accessing services at the other SSA Branch Offices. My constituents on the south side in zip codes 53204, 53207 and 53135 (City of St. Francis) need these services to be accessible.

Please provide my office with information on the sites GSA identified and the findings on those sites as well as whether the space at the Milwaukee Public Library Building is being considered for relocation. Losing the services and resources the Mitchell Street Branch provides will be detrimental to my constituents in these three zip code areas.

Thank you for your assistance and attention to this request. Please contact my Casework Supervisor, Maria Kasperski at (414) 297-1140 or by e-mail at Maria.Kasperski@mail.house.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Gwen Moore Member of Congress

GM/MK

Cc: Mayor Tom Barrett
Cc: Alderman Jose Perez

Cc: Phyllis M. Smith, SSA Regional Commissioner

INTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

# Social Security Administration (Milwaukee Mitchell Field Office) Lease Procurement History 1/14/18

### **Current Lease:**

- 1710 S. 7th St., Milwaukee, WI (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of a multi-tenant building)
- 2.1 miles SW from the SSA downtown Field Office and 6.9 miles from Greenfield location
- GSA Lease LWI16874
- Lease Term: 11/27/02 11/26/2022 (20 years, 10 years firm)
- Termination rights effective 11/26/12 with 90 days notice
- 8,670 usf/10,102 rsf

### New Lease Requirements:

- 9,019 usf/10,372 rsf of contiguous space on a single floor
- Public transportation must be accessible within ¼ mile of the building
- Prefers 1st floor space but can be on the 2nd floor and above as long as the building has 2
  working elevators that both the public and employees can access
- Building must be in a professional environment (i.e. zoned commercial). No warehouse/industrial space.
- Parking for SSA's clientele (public community) must be available
- Lease Term: 10 years (5 years firm)
- Delineated area:

North: National AvenueSouth: Layton AvenueEast: Lake Michigan

o West: 27<sup>th</sup> St/S. Layton Blvd

#### Lease Project Timeline:

10/23/15: Security issues and maintenance issues were reported to GSA at this location by SSA. Specifically, that the requirement for 2 elevators to function at all times was not being met at all times and that there were security concerns related to the building and as well as ongoing crime in the area. GSA Service Center, GSA Real Estate Division and DHS-FPS met to discuss this lease location and building. In addition, GSA had discussions with the Landlord to relay the Government's concerns regarding the ongoing building maintenance issues and the ongoing crime in the area and in the building.

12/7/15: GSA places preliminary ad ("expressions of interest") in FedBizOpps (FBO). No responses were received from the expression of interest ad. GSA starts researching the market again (via CoStar).

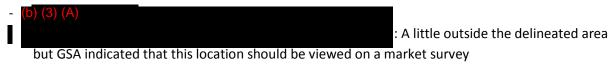
12/9/2015: SSA provided GSA with the official space requirements (SF-81 package) for 9,019 ABOA SF for a 10 year term/5 years firm lease term. SSA indicated that they could not increase the lease term as they needed flexibility in regards to the Milwaukee Service Areas (so that they can be able to address any increases/decreases in staffing in their Milwaukee area field offices).

1/19/16: GSA places formal ad into FBO (responses due 2/17/16).

1/20/16: GSA Lease Contracting Officer (LCO) visited the existing SSA location as part of a two day driving tour (window canvassing) and evaluation of the market area in and beyond the specified delineated area. The purpose of the window canvassing was to get a preview of potential/available locations. Several additional locations were found, but upon discussion with the building contacts, space was already committed to other tenants or not suitable for the intended use. One (b) (3) (A) grocery store out lot site with a building under construction was found that was not listed in CoStar.

2/1/16: GSA reaches out to Mayor Barrett (via email with copy of the ad) indicating GSA was starting a lease procurement and directed any questions to either the LCO or Team Manager. The City office referred GSA to a Mr. Sam Leichting (City Development office) to discuss GSA's space needs.

2/12/16: GSA goes on another window canvassing tour and drove entire delineated area (as well as outside the area) and only found one space that did not respond to the expression of interest and the ad. LCO noted that there was a shortage of commercial office space within the delineated area and that the delineated area was primarily residential and retail. The following 2 locations were found during the window canvassing:



SSA identified the following 2 locations:

- retail center. This location/building would not meet GSA's fire/lifesafety regulations due to the depth of the space. The large retail space would have to be renovated to include internal corridors so that entrances (main, employee, and emergency) can be created.
- This location is outside the north boundary (and only 1.4 miles from the SSA downtown office) and building rep indicated that the space was not available

2/17/16: Responses due to the 1/19/16 placed ad. GSA receives 3 response

(b) (3) (A)

Responses to the ad were a result of GSA's window canyassing and reaching out to the canvassed locations to notify them to formally respond to the ad (if interested in the procurement).

2/24/16: GSA called and emailed (attaching a copy of the ad) Mr. Sam Leichting (with the City of Milwaukee Dept. of City Development), to discuss the SSA Milwaukee (Mitchell) procurement and requested assistance in locating potential locations that would meet SSA's long term requirements. GSA indicated that they had very few responses to the ad.

2/24/16: Mr. Leichting emailed GSA indicating the City is undertaking a corridor plan for south 27<sup>th</sup> street in 2016 and will share the LCO's email address so that he can get updates. Mr. Leichting also forwarded a contact name/number regarding the (b) (3) (A) location. Mr. Leichting requested GSA and the City to keep brainstorming.

3/10/16: Conducted additional market research and found the following 2 locations:

(b) (3) (A)

: Added this location to the market survey itinerary

3/17/16: GSA, SSA regional and local office, and DHS-FPS attended a market survey that viewed four properties (including the existing property). As a result of that market survey, three properties were eliminated as they did not meet the minimum technical requirements of SSA's space needs. The only location that met SSA's long term space needs was the (b) (3) (A) location/site.

Unacceptable:

| High level crime area (public safety); does not meet minimum usf, ongoing elevator issues (non operational); renovation of space (that will be needed to meet SSA's current space standards/specs) will be disruptive to staff

- (b) (3) (A) Strip mall center; space is more than twice as long as wide (making furniture design/layout inefficient)

on story building; building not visible from 27<sup>th</sup> street; accessibility to building is difficult; no direct sidewalk or driveway leading to the building; not easily accessible by visitors.

#### Acceptable:

- (b) (3) (A) location):

4/14/16: The one approved site (b) (3) (A) location) was solicited and work to receive a qualified offer continued up through August 2016. After multiple attempts to get an offer and a response, the owner's rep then stated they had leased the entire property to an auto supply store (b) (3) (A) with a longer term lease commitment as well as obtain a retail type tenant (it was indicated that the Owner was not interested in turning the building into an office building and wanted a retail tenant). SSA was informed that there were no viable offers at that point.

May – October 2016: GSA re-reviewed the market again which yielded no additional locations/sites. There is no GSA controlled vacant federal and/or lease space. It was noted that the delineated area included a mature area of Milwaukee, with very little interest from the development community to build

speculatively and/or retrofit stand alone office buildings. There is no professional office space in the delineated area and the market is retail based.

12/9/16: Team Manager reached out to the City (Teddy Benis) requesting a conference call with the Commissioner of Dept. of City Development (Rocky Marcoux). Mr. Benis indicated that Mr. Marcoux was not available until the following week.

12/13/16: The GSA Team Manager and LCO and Mr. Marcoux discussed the requirements during a conference call. Mr. Marcoux indicated that he was not aware of any new locations that would meet SSA's requirements within the specified delineated area. GSA asked if there was any available space within the city or county buildings. Mr. Marcoux indicated that there was no space in the county and/or city buildings that would meet SSA's requirements. The City indicated that it is very difficult to find viable locations that would meet GSA's space requirements (needing a minimum of 9,019 contiguous usable square feet of space, needing 2 accessible elevators if located on the 2nd floor and above and the limited delineated area), especially the fact that SSA is restricted (due to other adjacent Service Areas) in expanding the delineated area with Greenfield (6.9 miles away) and Milwaukee DTN (2.1 miles away) being so close. However, Mr. Marcoux indicated that he would continue to keep an eye out and reach out to GSA if potential locations can be identified.

Early January 2017: GSA conducted market research again to see if anything new popped up in the market that could meet SSA's minimum space needs/requirements and reached out to various locations. GSA reached out to the (b) (3) (A) , however, the building indicated that this mixed use (office, retail and residential) if for "high end" tenants and they were not interested in having a public facing government office in their building.

January 2017: GSA determined that there is no office space or suitable other space within the delineated area to meet SSA's long term requirement. Southeast Milwaukee is a primarily residential area and very close to the Milwaukee central business district/downtown, so office requirements are generally filled in the downtown area. There is also no market speculative (new development of office buildings) office space in the delineated area. Limited retail can be available in this area from time to time, but the short term of the Government's requirement (10 years (5 years firm)) is not attractive to retail developers or building owners. SSA indicated that they could not increase the lease term as they needed flexibility in regards to the Milwaukee Service Areas (so that they can be able to address any increases/decreases in staffing in their Milwaukee area field offices). In addition, it is extremely unlikely that new construction can be obtained given the limited commitment of a 10 year/ 5 year firm lease. In addition, GSA also asked if the delineated area can be increased south and west. However, SSA indicated that increasing the southern and western boundaries would overlap into the other SSA locations/service areas. GSA has conducted multiple market tours, conducted ongoing market research, and reached out to both the market as well as the City of Milwaukee multiple times.

1/25/17: GSA Team Manager notified SSA that GSA has exhausted all efforts locating viable prospects/locations that would meet SSA's long term space requirements. Project is placed on hold by SSA.

January 23, 2017

Social Security Administration (Milwaukee Mitchell Field Office)
1710 S. 7th St.
Milwaukee, WI
Lease LWI16874, AWI0189 expiring 11/26/2022, cancellable with 90 days notice

Report of lease action to date by GSA:

Security issues and maintenance issues were reported to GSA at this location by SSA late in 2015. Specifically, that the requirement for 2 elevators to function at all times was not being met at all times and that there were security concerns related to adjacent and/or building tenants (Planned Parenthood and Family Dollar Store) as well as crime in the area was ongoing.

GSA Field Office, GSA Real Estate Division and DHS-FPS met to discuss this lease location and building. In addition, GSA had discussions with the Landlord to relay the Government's concerns regarding the ongoing building maintenance issues as well as the ongoing crime in the area and in the building.

On 12/9/2015, SSA provided GSA with an SF-81 for 9,019 ABOA SF, a modest increase from the existing 8,670 ABOA SF for a 10 year term/5 years firm lease term. GSA immediately performed market search of available space (per SSA's requested delineated area) and although some retail appeared to be available, no commercial office space was found.

In January, 2016, GSA Lease Contracting Officer (LCO) visited the Mitchell St. location as part of a two day driving tour (window canvassing) and evaluation of the market area in and beyond the specified delineated area. Several additional locations were found, but upon discussion with the building contacts, space was already committed to other tenants or not suitable for the intended use. On with a building under construction was found that was not listed (A)

In February 2016, the GSA LCO reached out to Mr. Sam Leichting, City of Milwaukee, to discuss the SSA Milwaukee (Mitchell) procurement and requested assistance in locating locations that would meet SSA's long term requirements.

On March 17, 2016, GSA, SSA regional and local office, and DHS-FPS attended a market survey that viewed four properties (including the existing property). As a result of that market survey, three properties were rejected as they did not meet the minimum technical requirements of SSA's space needs. The only location that met SSA's long term space needs was the (b) (3) (A) location/site.

The one approved site (b) (3) (A) ) was solicited on 4/14/2016 and work to receive a qualified offer continued up through August 2016. At that time, the Offeror then stated they had leased

the entire property to an auto supply store with a longer term lease commitment as well as obtain a retail type tenant (versus office space tenant). SSA was informed that there were no offers at that point.

GSA also re-reviewed the market again which yielded no additional locations/sites. There is no GSA controlled vacant federal and/or lease space. Early winter of 2016, the GSA Lease Contracting Officer and Team Manager reached out to the City of Milwaukee again who again indicated that they were not aware of any locations that would meet SSA's requirements and would be within the specified delineated area. The City indicated that the specified delineated area was limited for viable locations as the SSA Milwaukee Mitchell location was only 2.1 miles away from the downtown SSA office and 6.9 miles away from the SSA Greenfield, WI location.

#### **Conclusion:**

At the present time, there is no office space or suitable other space within the delineated area to meet SSA's long term requirement. Southeast Milwaukee is a primarily residential area and very close to the Milwaukee central business district/downtown, so office requirements are generally filled in the downtown area. There is also no market speculative (new development of office buildings) office space in the delineated area. Limited retail can be available in this area from time to time, but the short term of the Government's requirement (5 to 10 years) is not attractive to retail developers or building owners. In addition, it is extremely unlikely that new construction can be obtained given the limited commitment of a 10 year/ 5 year firm lease requested by SSA.



Regional Office V P.O. Box 8280 Chicago IL 60680-8280

April 11, 2016

Ms. Melissa McKenna Team Manager SSA Customer Delivery Team General Services Administration 230 S. Dearborn, Room 3300 Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Ms. McKenna:

Re: Milwaukee Mitchell, Wisconsin Social Security Field Office

Following the market survey tour for the subject office, we ask that an RLP be sent to the following conditionally acceptable location:

## **CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE:**

#### (b) (3) (A)

The site being offered is a newly constructed standalone building located on the south side of Oklahoma Ave. This is a 10,784 Sq. Ft. building, located in the (b) (3) (A)

This site has an open space layout that can be configured to SSA's current standards. There are windows on all sides of the building that provide natural lighting. This site has good visibility and many amenities nearby, which include restaurants, banks and shopping within the retail center of the proposed site. There is regularly scheduled bus service in the area with a bus stop approximately 380 Ft. from the site. The site offers ample parking to serve the staff and our visitors. This site is conditionally acceptable provided the lessor provides an acceptable site plan.

# **UNACCEPTABLE:**

# 1710 S 7th St. (Current Location) - NON CBD

This is the current office location. This is a three-story brick building with the field office located on the second floor. We currently occupy 8,670 Sq. Ft. This is a high-level crime area with employee and public safety being a concern. There is a Planned Parenthood office on the third floor and almost no onsite parking, which forces our staff to go off site for parking, putting them at risk. Lessor has not provided additional building security to address security concerns. The employee entrance needs to be redesigned to provide a secure and accessible entrance. The public elevator has been nonoperational numerous times and the HVAC continues to be an issue. The current lessor is non-responsive to the office's needs and the lease requirements. The lessor proposes to redesign the current space. The renovation would impact and interfere with the staff and

the public being served while continuing normal daily operations. This site is no longer suitable for SSA.

# (b) (3) (A) — NON CBD

This is a one-story strip mall center; the suite is 9,513 Sq. Ft. The suite is a long narrow space located between two suites. It is more than twice as long as wide measuring 49 Ft. by 181 Ft. making systems furniture and barrier wall layout problematic. The suite has one front entrance and an emergency exit that leads to the alley. To meet our requirements, the lessor would have to modify the front entrance to meet SSA requirements for separate entrances for public and staff. Only six front windows are visible which would have to be reduced to add in a second entrance for the employees. The site does not offer the possibility of incorporating windows for natural light. Due to building design, there is no available space for exterior signage on the building. The space would require major modification to relocate restrooms, which does not allow for an efficient layout. This site is unacceptable.

# (b) (3) (A) NON CBD

The space being offered is located in a one-story building with 10,600 Sq. Ft. The building is not visible from (b) (3) (A)

The building is located (b) (3) (A)

(b) (3) (A)

Accessibility to the building is difficult. There is no direct sidewalk or driveway leading to the building. The site is not easily accessible by visitors and its visibility is compromised. This site is unacceptable.

If you have any questions, please contact Agnes Garbett at (312) 575-4066 or Michael Zavala at (312) 575-4080.

Sincerely,

/s/ Masheba Gailey-Harris Field Services Team Leader



## Mark Montgomery - 5P2R6 <mark.montgomery@gsa.gov>

# Fwd: Market survey tour itinerary

1 message

Mark Montgomery - 5P2R6 <mark.montgomery@gsa.gov> Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 1:09 PM To: "Garbett, Agnes" < Agnes. Garbett@ssa.gov>, "Zamfoti, Anthony" < Anthony. Zamfoti@ssa.gov>, Melissa McKenna -5P2R6 <Melissa.Mckenna@gsa.gov>

Hi Agnes,

Cover page/final itinerary market survey 3/17/2016.

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Mark Montgomery - 5P2R6 <mark.montgomery@gsa.gov>

Date: Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 8:40 AM Subject: Re: Market survey tour itinerary

To: "Garbett, Agnes" < Agnes. Garbett@ssa.gov>

Thanks, Agnes,

I tried to send you a pdf of the market survey book yesterday, but the file was too big. I will have them for you on Thursday.

Mark

On Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 7:31 AM, Garbett, Agnes < Agnes. Garbett@ssa.gov> wrote:

Mark,

The SSA attendees are:

Chris Churchill (Area Director)

Marlene Lazaro (District Manager of the Milwaukee Mitchell office)

Kathy Slama (District Manager of the Greenfield, WI office)

Agnes Garbett (Support Services Specialist)

Anthony Zamfoti (Management Analyst)

Michael Zavala (Management Analyst)

Agnes Garbett

Support Services Specialist

Field Services and Management Team

Ph: 312-575-4066

mark.montgomery@gsa.gov

Fax: 312-575-4061
From: Mark Montgomery - 5P2R6 [mailto:mark.montgomery@gsa.gov] Sent: Friday, March 11, 2016 12:42 PM To: Garbett, Agnes Subject: Market survey tour itinerary
Hi Agnes,
Attached is the market survey tour itinerary for next week.
Would you please send me the list of SSA attendees to include on this, so I know how many books to make. Also, please let me know how many books will be distributed to SSA folks?
I am still working on getting the market survey forms from some of them.
Thanks,
Mark
Mark A. Montgomery, CCIM, RPA
Lease Contracting Officer
Leader Contracting Officer
Canaral Samilaca Administration Dublic Buildings Samilac Barrier 5
General Services Administration Public Buildings Service Region 5
Real Estate Division
230 South Dearborn St. Suite 3300
Chicago, IL 60604
312.353.3026 Office
(b) (6)

Mark A. Montgomery, CCIM, RPA Lease Contracting Officer

General Services Administration Public Buildings Service Region 5 Real Estate Division 230 South Dearborn St. Suite 3300 Chicago, IL 60604

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Cell

mark.montgomery@gsa.gov

Mark A. Montgomery, CCIM, RPA Lease Contracting Officer

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mark.montgomery@gsa.gov



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19K



January 25, 2018

The Honorable Gwen Moore U.S. House of Representatives – 4<sup>th</sup> District 2245 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Moore,

This letter is in response to your January 24, 2018 inquiry regarding the General Services Administration (GSA) lease procurement to locate office space for the Social Security Administration (SSA) Milwaukee Mitchell Street Branch.

The following locations were identified during the procurement:

- Did not meet SSA's technical requirements
- Outside the required delineated area
- Did not meet SSA's technical requirements
- Building indicated they were not interested in housing a public facing government office in this mixed use building
- Owner indicated that they were not interested in renovating the building into an office building and was already working with a retail tenant

On January 17, 2018, GSA received official notification from SSA of their decision to close the Milwaukee Mitchell office. Please be advised that GSA did not make the decision to close the SSA Milwaukee Mitchell office as we are not responsible for making any federal agency office closure decisions. As SSA no longer has a requirement for office space in this location, GSA cannot consider the 906 W. Historic Mitchell Street location.

GSA conducted multiple market searches, window canvassing, and market surveys as well as multiple contacts to the City of Milwaukee over the course of the active procurement. GSA exhausted all efforts locating viable locations that would meet SSA's long term space needs.

Sincerely,

John Cooke Acting Regional Administrator General Services Administration



January 25, 2018

The Honorable Gwen Moore U.S. House of Representatives – 4<sup>th</sup> District 2245 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Moore,

This letter is in response to your January 24, 2018 inquiry regarding the General Services Administration (GSA) lease procurement to locate office space for the Social Security Administration (SSA) Milwaukee Mitchell Street Branch.

Please be advised that GSA did not make or was part of any decision to close the SSA Milwaukee office. GSA does not get involved or is responsible for making any federal agency office closure decisions.

The following locations were identified during the procurement:

- Did not meet SSA's technical requirements
- Outside the required delineated area
- Did not meet SSA's technical requirements
- Building indicated they were not interested in housing a public facing government office in this mixed use building
- (b) (3) (A) : Owner indicated that they were not interested in renovating the building into an office building and was already working with a retail tenant (b) (3) (A)

On January 17, 2018, GSA received official notification from SSA that they will be closing the Milwaukee Mitchell office. Therefore, GSA will not be considering the 906 W. Historic Mitchell Street location since there is no longer a need for a lease space action.

GSA conducted multiple market researches, window canvassing, market surveys, and City of Milwaukee contacts. Please be assured that GSA exhausted all efforts locating viable locations that would meet SSA's long term space needs.

Sincerely,



John Cooke Acting Regional Administrator General Services Administration

#### DATE

The Honorable Gwen Moore U.S. House of Representatives 2245 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

# Dear Congresswoman Moore:

This letter is in response to your January 24, 2018, inquiry regarding the General Services Administration's (GSA) efforts to locate office space for the Social Security Administration (SSA) office currently located on Mitchell Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In December 2015, GSA began a lease procurement to locate a suitable location for SSA's Mitchell Street Branch Office. GSA exhausted all efforts to locate office space that would meet SSA's long term needs, including conducting market searches and surveys, canvassing efforts, and working directly with the City of Milwaukee's Department of City Development. A list of locations identified and evaluated during the procurement, as well as reasons for not being considered, are below.

- (b) (3) (A)
   requirements
   (b) (3) (A)
   Did not meet SSA's technical requirements
   Did not meet SSA's technical requirements
   Outside required delineated area
   Building was not interested in housing a public-facing government office in this mixed-use building
- Owner provided an initial offer, but eventually withdrew the offer in order to lease space to a competing retail tenant

On January 17, 2018, GSA received official notification from SSA of their decision to close the Mitchell Street Branch Office. Please note that that GSA is not responsible for making federal agency office closure decisions and was not part of the decision to close the Mitchell Street office.

Additionally, at the time of the procurement, the 906 W. Historic Street Mitchell Street location was not identified as a potential solution, nor was GSA made aware that the location was available. Moving forward, GSA is unable to consider that location without a space requirement from SSA.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 501-0563.

Sincerely,

Brennan Hart Associate Administrator